

Elaboration of Risk Assessment Methodology in the Ecological Education System in Armenia

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Goal and Scope . At the present, the formation of a sustainable ecological education program is in progress in Armenia. All the social groups of the community are involved in this process, beginning with youngsters from schools and universities, and ending with teaching staff and the decision-makers. Programs on education and scientific-methodological documentation are being developed/expanded and training of corresponding specialists is in progress. Development of an ecological education system is of high priority for the Government of the Republic of Armenia, and the relevant supporting legislation already exists.

Methods . It is of vital importance that the ecological education system include subjects like ecology, ecological safety, and ecological risk assessment and management. Expertise in these and other related subjects is necessary at national, regional, and international levels. Armenia has sufficient existing programs (available to be shared or used in joint investigations) to develop the curriculum of an ecological education program. While the level of risk assessment in Armenia needs to be elevated, Armenian scientists have begun to prepare excellent research papers where the estimation of the potential pollution of the environment is based on the risk assessment and scientific modeling.

Results and Conclusions . In order to fill this gap, in August 2000, an “Armenian Risk Assessment Fund” (Fund) was founded on the basis of the Ecological-Noosphere Research Center of the National Academy of Sciences. The establishment of this Fund has been supported by Dr. Alvin Young, Director of the Center for Risk Excellence of the United States Department of Energy and the Armenian National Commission of UNESCO. We have assembled/developed very valuable literature, methodological material, audio-video aids etc. At the present time we are working on a joint scientific educational program for the years 2001-2005 on the organization of study courses, practical education, and on student exchange between Armenia and America.

Recommendations and Outlook . There are 15 state and about 80 private higher education institutions in the country. Considering the importance of and public interest in risk information, the Fund is going to enable higher education programs for teaching staff, students, as well as for the state employees, to upgrade their qualifications and knowledge in the field of ecology, safety of life and ecological risk assessment.